

## CLIMATOLOGICAL DATA FOR JANUARY, 1912.

## DISTRICT No. 5, UPPER MISSISSIPPI VALLEY.

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## GENERAL SUMMARY.

The month will long be memorable in the weather annals of the upper Mississippi Valley. For the district as a whole, it undoubtedly was the coldest month in the history of the Weather Bureau, the records extending back to 1870. Over part of the Minnesota area, most of Wisconsin and Iowa, and northern and central Illinois it was probably the coldest month in the last half century or more. While the records for extreme low temperature for the period referred to were not broken at any station, they were closely approached in several cases. At Des Moines, Iowa, the minimum on the 12th,  $-29^{\circ}$ , was within  $1^{\circ}$  of the lowest on record. The cold was remarkable no less for its persistency than for its severity. Intensely low temperatures continued throughout the first two decades over much of the district, while in the northern part of it the entire month was a period of unbroken cold.

The nearest rival to the current month in respect to low mean temperature was January, 1875, which still stands as the coldest month on record for the northwestern part of the district. At St. Paul, Minn., that month was slightly colder than the current month, while at Moorhead, Minn., it was considerably colder. Other notably cold months in this district since 1870 are February, 1875, and January, 1886, 1887, and 1888.

Generally speaking, the month was a dry one, and the great bulk of the precipitation was in the form of snow. Days on which the snowfall amounted to only inappreciable quantities were unusually numerous. The snowfall was not heavy, except in southern Illinois, but owing to the low temperature, much of it remained throughout the month and, accumulating on the good covering that was already present at the beginning of the month, resulted in deep snow over much of the district all the month, and at the close the ground was bare only in the extreme southern part of the district.

The intense cold naturally was the cause, directly or indirectly, of much suffering and inconvenience. From a commercial point of view the transportation interests suffered most. Railway traffic was almost paralyzed at times, the low temperature and the drifting of the light, fluffy snow both being contributing factors. Trolley lines suffered equally with the steam railways. In numerous instances locomotives literally became frozen to the rails and thawing had to be resorted to before the trains could proceed. By the 10th the coal situation had become serious in many localities. The unusual consumption, together with the inability of the railroads to move the article from the mines promptly, caused the most serious shortage in many years, and for a time conditions were actually alarming. Happily, a slight moderation from the extreme cold set in on the 13th, and, though the warming up was slight and lasted less than a day, the railroads were enabled to move sufficient coal to afford relief for immediate needs and the crisis was passed.

To some extent the objectionable features attending the unprecedented conditions of the month had their compensations. The deep snow that covered most of the district protected winter grain, the ice harvest was abundant and of excellent quality, and it is believed that there was less sickness than usual owing to the absence of sudden and marked variations from cold to warmth, and vice versa.

The following table presents in condensed form the leading features of climatological interest for the several parts of the district:

Parts of States within District No. 5.	Temperature.				Precipitation.				Average number rainy days.	
	Mean.	Departure.	Highest.	Lowest.	Average.	Departure.	Greatest total.	Least total.		
North Dakota.....	-8.0	-11.7	46	-50	0.28	-0.18	0.50	0.07	3.3	
Minnesota.....	-6.8	-15.3	37	-53	0.41	-0.33	0.85	0.06	4.9	
South Dakota.....	-2.6	-14.8	38	-34	0.21	-0.41	0.21	0.21	1.2	
Wisconsin.....	-3.6	-17.6	35	-49	0.70	-0.50	1.69	0.18	8.5	
Iowa.....	3.7	-15.1	48	-42	0.56	-0.63	1.90	0.05	5.8	
Missouri.....	15.5	-12.9	53	-28	0.52	-1.65	0.92	0.20	4.3	
Indiana.....	12.8	-13.6	40	-23	1.41	-0.60	2.07	1.08	10.2	
Illinois.....	12.5	-12.6	59	-30	0.86	-1.40	4.13	0.11	6.3	

## TEMPERATURE.

The mean temperature of the district, as derived from the records of 297 stations, was  $1.0^{\circ}$ , or almost  $15^{\circ}$  less than the normal. The monthly means were below zero north of a line drawn through northern Iowa and southern Wisconsin, while over a large area in North Dakota and Minnesota they were below  $-10^{\circ}$ . The lowest mean temperature reported was  $-16.6^{\circ}$  at Pembina, N. Dak. The deficiency in the mean temperature appears to have been greatest over northeastern Wisconsin, where it averaged almost  $18^{\circ}$  daily. From the center of greatest cold the deficiency decreased uniformly in all directions, being about  $8^{\circ}$  in the North Dakota area and the same in southern Illinois. The deficiency exceeded  $10^{\circ}$  over probably more than 90 per cent of the district.

The mean temperature was less than  $20^{\circ}$  throughout the district, save in southern Illinois, where at Cairo, the warmest station, it was  $26.6^{\circ}$ . At that point the month was the coldest on record with the exception of December, 1876, and January, 1886. Abnormally low temperature was practically continuous from the beginning of the month to the 20th, inclusive, in all parts of the district, but in the north the entire month was an unbroken period of cold weather. At Crookston, Minn., and Pembina, N. Dak., the minimum temperature was below zero every day and even as far south as Dubuque, Iowa, zero temperature or lower was reported during the first 21 days of the month except on the 17th.

The 21st inaugurated, over the southern half of the district, a 4 or 5 day period of milder weather, but this was followed by a return to cold weather, the month closing with the temperature below the normal in all sections. The period of most severe cold covered the 1st-12th, inclusive, when the temperature was continuously below zero in northern Minnesota and part of the North Dakota area, and even as far south as central Iowa it was below zero about one-half that time. At Pembina, N. Dak., the average temperature for the period under discussion was 26° below zero, the highest temperature there during that time being 10° below zero. At Des Moines, Iowa, the mean temperature for the 10-day period beginning on the 3d was -7.8°, which breaks all previous records of that character. A notable feature of the temperature conditions during the period of severest cold was the phenomenally low maximum readings. At some stations in North Dakota and Minnesota the temperature did not rise above -20° on the 5th, 6th, 10th, 11th, and 12th. The maximum at Des Moines, Iowa, on the 12th was -14°, the lowest on record. On that date, as well as on the 7th, the temperature was below zero all day over practically the entire district, except southern Illinois.

Most of the minimum temperatures of the month occurred on the 6th, 7th, 11th, 12th, and 13th. Generally speaking, the coldest day was the 12th, but over much of Illinois the lowest temperatures occurred on the 7th. The lowest temperature reported was -53°, at Pokegama Falls, Minn., on the 6th and 7th, and at Pine River Dam, in the same State, on the 12th. The milder weather that began on the 21st culminated a day or two later in the highest temperatures of the month over much of the district. In the North Dakota area and part of Minnesota, however, the 30th and 31st were the mildest days, while over most of the Indiana area the warmest weather occurred on the 18th. In general the maximum temperatures exceeded 40° only in the southern half of the district, where, at a few stations in southern Illinois, they were above 50°, the extreme, 59°, being reported from Carbondale, Cobden, and Du Quoin, Ill., on the 23d. Over practically all Wisconsin and Minnesota the temperature was below the freezing point all month, Fosston, Minn., and Pembina, N. Dak., reporting the remarkably low maximum of 18°. At the latter station the temperature was continuously below zero till the 22d.

#### PRECIPITATION.

The average precipitation for the district, 323 stations reporting, was 0.60 inch, or somewhat less than one-half the normal. The month was drier than usual over a very large part of the district, only a few widely scattered areas having an excess of moisture. The deficiency was greatest in the Illinois River Valley and the Missouri area. The heaviest precipitation was in southern Illinois, where, at five stations, it exceeded 2 inches, Cairo reporting the greatest amount, 4.13 inches. Elsewhere the total precipitation was less than 1 inch, save over a few limited areas. In the North Dakota area and in Minnesota the average was less than one-half an inch and only slightly greater amounts were reported from Iowa and Wisconsin. Fourteen stations, most of them in North Dakota and Minnesota, reported falls of less than 0.10 inch.

Over most of the district precipitation was of frequent occurrence but, as might be expected in view of the general deficiency, the amounts as a rule were light. Most of the month's precipitation in the northern part of the district did not occur until after the 24th, but elsewhere the falls were better distributed. Precipitation was most general, perhaps, on the 28th-29th and 31st, but it was fairly general on the 7th-8th, 13th-14th, and 17th-18th.

**Snowfall.**—Practically all the precipitation, except that that occurred in central and southern Illinois and the Indiana area on the 17th and 18th, and in southern Illinois on the 28th, was in the form of snow, the average fall for the district being 6 inches. The heaviest snowfall occurred in southern Illinois, where it was approximately 20 inches at a few stations. Only a limited number of stations elsewhere reported more than 10 inches.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

There was more sunshine than usual in all parts of the district, the excess averaging about 15 per cent. The percentage of the possible amount was about 60. The average number of clear days was 15; partly cloudy, 7; cloudy, 9; with 0.01 inch or more precipitation, 5.

The prevailing wind direction was northwesterly over practically all the district and velocities were probably slightly lower than usual for January. The highest velocity for a five-minute period was at the rate of 42 miles an hour, at St. Paul, Minn., on the 4th.

#### RIVERS.

The rivers and streams of the northern part of the district were frozen over throughout the month. In the Red River of the North, at Moorhead, Minn., the ice was 32 inches thick at the close of the month. In the Mississippi the thickness at that time ranged from 24 inches, at La Crosse, Wis., to 12 inches, at Hannibal, Mo., and there were gorges and floating ice as far southward as Cairo, Ill.

An extensive ice gorge filled the Illinois River at Marseilles during the early part of the month. The water wheels that furnish power to the industrial plants of the city could not be operated, and as a result business had to be suspended. The closing down of the hydroelectric plant paralyzed the service of the Chicago, Ottawa & Peoria Interurban line.

Mr. W. E. Barron, local forecaster, Cairo, Ill., reports in part as follows relative to conditions in the Cairo, Ill., river district:

The Mississippi River was more or less filled with floating and gorge ice. Navigation closed above Cairo on the 3d. On the 19th the U. S. S. *Minnetonka* broke off a piece of the gorge opposite Bird Point, Mo., and the transfer steamer *Marquand* became entangled therein and was temporarily disabled. By the 22d the *Minnetonka* had succeeded in making an opening to Eliza Point and in rescuing the United States Engineer's fleet, which had been stationed there for several months. The ice began to move out from back of town at 4 a. m. on the 26th and navigation between Cairo and Bird Point, Mo., was temporarily suspended. At Chester, Ill., although the ice moved short distances once or twice, the river continued frozen from the 9th to the end of the month. During the dense fog on the afternoon of the 28th several boats attempted to cross the Mississippi from Bird Point, Mo., to Cairo Point. All but one of them passed over safely, the one that did not encountering an ice floe, which forced the boat to float downstream till a landing could be effected. This occurrence gave rise to a newspaper report that 11 men had been drowned, which was not true.



















TABLE 3.—*Maximum and minimum temperatures for January, 1912. District No. 5—Continued.*

Date.	Hannibal, Mo.		Laporte, Ind.		Illinois.																	
					Cairo.		Greenville.		La Salle		Monmouth.		Mount Vernon §§		Peoria.		Springfield.		Winnebago.			
	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.
1.	25	7	21	7	36	20	28	12	16	3	15	-1	32	16	21	5	25	11	11	11	-3	
2.	21	9	20	10	43	27	32	18	11	3	15	-3	36	16	18	5	22	10	7	6	-6	
3.	18	6	23	14	34	21	26	9	13	2	14	-3	30	14	17	3	21	6	8	4	-4	
4.	9	3	22	0	32	17	18	6	-6	5	-4	25	13	8	-2	11	2	1	1	-10		
5.	10	-8	0	-6	22	10	8	0	-4	-12	0	-13	13	7	0	-10	6	-8	-9	-9	-16	
6.	-2	-11	3	-10	14	-4	0	-12	-6	-14	-4	-12	7	1	-3	-13	-2	-10	-10	-10	-19	
7.	0	-20	-2	-17	6	-8	-1	-20	-1	-16	-2	-19	8	-18	-2	-17	0	-19	-6	-6	-23	
8.	11	0	8	-4	22	6	15	-2	3	-3	4	-3	10	-14	5	-6	8	-2	1	-3	-8	
9.	22	3	5	-5	29	7	20	4	8	-5	10	-4	22	0	11	-3	16	2	1	1	-10	
10.	8	-2	8	-5	43	17	15	3	1	-5	3	5	20	3	5	-5	7	-1	-4	-4	-13	
11.	1	-7	10	-5	17	7	8	0	-2	-8	-3	-9	10	5	-2	-6	2	-3	-5	-5	-13	
12.	-4	-18	15	-4	8	-5	3	-10	0	-15	-1	-22	3	-5	-1	-16	-2	-13	-5	-5	-22	
13.	18	-15	8	-15	20	-8	15	-13	15	-11	14	-16	17	-13	13	-17	14	-11	12	12	-18	
14.	22	4	18	7	28	16	24	11	18	1	20	4	26	-7	19	4	22	8	16	5	5	
15.	4	-8	18	8	24	1	16	-5	3	-6	9	-11	4	0	4	-8	4	-6	5	-10		
16.	26	0	11	-5	31	1	17	-8	15	-9	16	-11	37	-12	17	-11	18	-6	13	-14		
17.	40	26	33	10	50	31	46	16	33	15	34	16	43	-3	34	17	39	18	28	11		
18.	31	15	35	22	50	26	45	24	28	9	30	19	43	36	31	10	40	16	22	10		
19.	17	-2	22	-5	29	19	24	11	9	-5	22	-9	24	15	10	-6	16	1	10	-11		
20.	25	11	21	-7	42	21	32	-12	21	1	20	0	42	11	21	6	26	12	16	-8		
21.	45	10	30	4	45	23	43	14	36	2	39	0	42	15	40	3	43	10	26	-7		
22.	48	34	34	14	55	37	49	33	39	18	42	22	51	30	40	23	46	32	33	7		
23.	47	30	36	28	57	41	47	32	37	19	39	29	53	32	39	27	43	32	34	19		
24.	31	24	28	9	45	33	34	24	26	10	36	14	39	28	23	13	32	23	19	-1		
25.	32	22	24	5	40	32	32	24	29	13	31	14	34	23	33	14	32	21	24	0		
26.	42	26	26	10	56	36	43	26	30	23	33	26	46	26	33	27	40	30	30	18		
27.	33	26	25	13	41	33	35	29	26	13	36	17	38	26	28	18	32	24	18	-3		
28.	32	23	22	12	50	35	37	30	25	17	32	17	35	32	28	21	34	27	20	12		
29.	28	18	25	18	37	29	33	23	23	18	26	13	32	26	24	17	27	20	21	14		
30.	28	13	24	11	31	27	29	20	24	11	28	9	30	25	25	10	26	15	23	3		
31.	39	14	30	9	38	23	37	15	31	10	33	9	39	20	32	10	36	14	28	1		
Mos.	22.8	7.5	19.5	4.0	34.7	18.4	26.1	10.5	16.5	2.4	19.2	2.3	28.7	11.2	18.5	3.6	22.1	8.2	12.5	-3.8		

<sup>a</sup>, <sup>b</sup>, <sup>c</sup>, etc., indicate respectively 1, 2, 3, etc., days missing from the record.<sup>§</sup> Data are from standard instruments not supplied by the U. S. Weather Bureau.<sup>§§</sup> Instruments are read in the morning; the maximum temperature then read is charged to the preceding day, on which it almost always occurs.